THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

of

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

presents

EXPLORATIONS

Sunday, October 20, 1974 at 8:00 p.m.
Convocation Hall, Arts Building

FANTASIA CONCERTANTE ..... Violet Archer (1913-)

Joan Pecover, flute
Dayna Fisher, oboe
Ernest Dalwood, clarinet
String Orchestra

conducted by Malcolm Forsyth

SHEHERAZADE ..... Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Asie
La Flûte enchantée
L'Indifférent

Elizabeth Stangeland, soprano
Robert Stangeland, piano

INTERMISSION

SIX CHANSONS ..... Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)

La Biche *(The Doe)*
Un Cygne *(A Swan)*
Puisque tout passe *(Since all is passing)*
Printemps *(Springtime)*
En Hiver *(In winter)*
Verger *(Orchard)*

The University of Alberta Madrigal Singers
Larry Cook, director

SUITE IN THE SPANISH STYLE ..... Alexis Roland-Manuel (1891-1966)

Entradilla
Villancico
Melodrama
Final

Dayna Fisher, oboe
Eddy Bayens, bassoon
Fordyce Pier, trumpet
Larry Cook, harpsichord

Commentary by Malcolm Forsyth

NOTES

Fantasia Concertante is an early work of the composer. Like other works of this period it is influenced by the modality of the British school.

The opening section of the composition is a lyrical adagio featuring the flute, oboe, and clarinet, as well as a solo cello. It leads into a vivo ma non troppo conveying a lighter mood which moves to a tranquil andantino with a new theme heard in the first violins. It evolves and increases in intensity with reminiscence of early thematic materials, gradually returns to the mood of the beginning and ends quietly.

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Shéhérezade was written in 1903, soon after the completion of the composer's studies at the Conservatory.

It is still very close in spirit to the fin de siècle movement in the arts; brimming with suggestive and exquisite impressions both exotic and erotic. The influence of Russian music was enormous in Parisian intellectual circles, of which there were many, but it was, according to Ravel, Debussy who introduced him to the tantalizing strangeness of Far Eastern music. There was nothing unusual about French composers drawing upon Spanish art and music in the nineteenth century, and Ravel had been successful at this "trendy" sort of composition in his earlier **Habanera** for piano, but visions of Arabia, Persia, India and China were indeed more appetizing for an artistic society which craved ever more subtle thrills in its creations, whether visual, literary, or musical.

The poet, Tristan Klingsor, was a shining example of the Parisian artistic temperament of these years. Equally talented as a painter, he had even composed several songs. Ravel chose three poems from Klingsor's **Shéhérezade**, a book of poems published in 1903. The poet was astonished at Ravel's choice of **Asie,** a long narrative which he felt was unsuitable for musical treatment. "For at the time," writes Klingsor, "he was engaged in a study of spoken verse, and was aiming at emphasizing accents and inflections, and magnifying them by melodic transposition; to fix his design firmly, he insisted on my reading the lines aloud." **Asie** describes a journey through Damascus, Persia and India to China, in a fantastic musical kaleidoscope.

La Flûte enchantée tells of the young woman listening at the window to her lover's flute while her master sleeps.

L'Indifférent evokes the strangeness of a boy passing by, speaking in a charming foreign tongue, and with eyes like a girl and a languid and feminine walk.

Ravel later scored the three songs for an opulent full orchestra. The orchestral version is frequently performed today.

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Hindemith's **Six Chansons** to texts by Reiner Rilke (1875-1926) were first published in 1939. In spirit, though not in actual sound, they recall some aspects of the sixteenth-century French chanson, thereby reflecting Hindemith's intense interest in "early" music. Their effect, however, is much more closely related to an idea of "French-ness" of the kind often associated with Debussy: subtle nuance, unexpected harmonic shifts, and lightness of texture.

There is no unified textual theme to the six poems; each one merely paints a "word picture" of some thing or idea: a doe, a swan, a "parallelization" of Winter and Death, and so on. The individual musical settings, likewise, have little relation to each other, but simply serve to interpret and enhance the texts.

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A pupil of Roussel and Ravel in his native Paris, Alexis Roland-Manuel distinguished himself as a composer, pedagogue and author.

His major compositions include two operas, three ballets, several film scores, choral works and songs. Besides the present work, he contributed only a string trio in the field of chamber music.

Other notable achievements include his appointment in 1947 as professor of general aesthetic culture at the Paris Conservatoire, and his appointment in 1949 as president of UNESCO's Council of Music.

Additionally, he wrote three highly regarded books on Ravel: Maurice Ravel et son oeuvre, (1914); Maurice Ravel et son oeuvre dramatique, (1928); and Maurice Ravel, (1938).

A biographer described his works as follows: ". . . his style, though unquestionably classic in its quality and elegance, is achieved by an avoidance of the risks of excessive liberty—art won from artifice, and artifice redeemed by sensibility and irony."

SHÉHEREZADE

Maurice Ravel

Asie

Asie. Vieux pays merveilleux descontes de nourice.
Où dort la fantasie comme une impératrice
En sa forêt tout emplie de mystère.
Asie. Je voudrais m'en aller avec la goëlette
Qui se berce ce soir dans le port
Mystérieuse et solitaire
Et qui déploie enfin ses voiles violettes
Comme un immense oiseau de nuit dans le ciel d'or.
Je voudrais m'en aller vers des îles de fleurs
En écoutant chanter la mer perverse
Sur un vieux rythme ensorceleur.
Je voudrais voir Damas et les villes de Perse avec les minarets legers dans l'air.
Je voudrais voir de beaux turbans de soie
Sur des visages noirs aux dents claires;
Je voudrais voir des yeux sombres d'amour
Et des prunelles brillants de joie
En des peaux jaunes comme des oranges;
Je voudrais voir des vêtements de velours
Et des habits à longues franges.
Je voudrais voir des calumets entre des bouches
Tout entourées de barbe blanche;
Je voudrais voir d'âpres marchand aux regards louches,
Et des cadis, et des vizirs
Qui du seul mouvement de leur doigt qui se penche
Accordent vie ou mort au gré de leur desir.
Je voudrais voir la Perse, et l'Inde, et puis la Chine,
Les mandarins ventrus sous les ombrelles,
Et les princesses aux mains fines,
Et les lettrés qui se querellent
Sur la poésie et sur la beauté;
Je voudrais m'attarder au palais enchanté
Et comme un voyageur étranger
Contempler à loisir des paysages peints
Sur des étoffes en des cadres de sapin
Avec un personnage au milieu d'un verger;
Je voudrais voir des assassins souriant
Du boureau qui coupe un cou d'innocent
Avec son grand sabre courbé d'Orient.
Je voudrais voir des pauvres et des reines;
Je voudrais voir des roses et du sang;
Je voudrais voir mourir d'amour ou bien de haine
Et puis m'en revenir plus tard
Narrer mon aventure aux curieux de rêves
En élevant comme Sindbad ma vieille tasse arabe
De temps in temps jusqu'à mes lèvres
Pour interrompre la conte avec art...

Asia

O Asia, O Asia!
Land of wonderful tales renowned in ancient lor
Where fancy's spirit dwells like some fair sleeping empress
'Mid her forest in mystery clad.
O Asia, Fain would I now set forth in you swift little schooner
Gently rocking in harbour this eve
With aspect strange and very lonely,
Which at tomorrow's dawn her red sails will unfurl
Like a gigantic bird of night in a golden sky.
Fain would I now set forth towards the islands of flow'rs
List'ning the while as chants the willful sea
The theme of some old magic spell.
Fain would I see Damascus and the cities of Persia with minarets so light high in the air
Fain would I see soft silken turbans twined
O'er dusky faces with glist'ning teeth;
Fain would I see dark eyes burning with love,
Their pupils shining and sparkling with joy,
Their skins a yellow of the ripest orange;
Fain would I see the dress with rich velvet folds,
The garment with long fringes bordered.
Fain would I see the calumets tight held in mouths
Hidden by beards grown long and snowy;
Fain would I see sour-looking merchants with eyes askew;
The cadis, too, and the great viziers
Who have but to raise up their finger an inch
To grant either life or death, perchance, just as they will.
Fain would I see Persia, India, ay even China,
Stout mandarins who loll under umbrellas.
Princesses sweet with tiny hands,
And learned men loudly debating
Over poetry and the charms of beauty;
I would linger awhile at a palace enchanted
And, like some foreign travelling sage,
Contemplate at my ease old landscapes
Done in colours rare on lovely textures framed with pine,
With someone in the midst of an orchard, alone;
Fain would I see murderous wretches who smile
Whilst the headsman chops off innocent heads
With scimitar deadly of true Eastern shape.
Fain would I see poor beggars and rich queens;
Fain would I see the rose and trace of blood;
Fain would I see men die of love or else of hate
And then later, returning home,
My story strange relate to those who believe in dreams,
From time to time raising up my old Arabian cup
Like Sindbad of yore, just to my lips,
Only to break off the tale--with art...

La Flûte enchantée

L'ombre est douce et mon maître dort
Coiffé d'un bonnet conique de soie
Et son long nez jaune en sa barbe blanche.
Mais mois, je sius eveillée encor
Et j'écoute au dehors
Une chanson de flute où s'épanche
Tour à tour la tristesse ou la joie.
Un air tour à tour langoureux ou frivole
Que mon amoureux chéri joue,
Et quand je m'approche de la croisee
Il me semble que chaque note s'envole
De la flûte vers ma joue
Comme un mystérieux baiser.

The Enchanted Flute

Cool the shade and deep my master's sleep,
Wearing his soft silken conical cap,
His long yellow nose in his snow-white beard.
But I, who patiently vigil keep,
I can hear far away
Sweet music of a flute which creates in turn
The yearning to laugh and to weep,
A tune now of languorous charm, now quite gay,
Which my own beloved doth play,
And when I draw near to the casement high
The each note, as 'twould seem, doth hither fly
From the flute to touch my face
In mysterious sweet embrace.

L'Indifférent

Tes yeux sont doux comme ceux d'un fille,
Jeune étranger
Et la courbe fine
De ton beau visage de duvet ombragé
Est plus séduisante encor de ligne.
Ta lèvre chante sur le pas de ma porte
Une langue inconnue et charmonte
Comme une musique fause.
Entre! Et que mon vin te rénconforte...
Mais non, tu passes
Et de mon seuil je te vois t'eloigner
Me faisant un dernier geste avec grace
Et la hanche légèrement ployée
Par ta démarche féminine et lasse...

The Heedless One

Soft as a maid's those sad eyes of thine,
O youth unknown,
And the noble curve
Of thy classic features newly shaded with down
Looks far more seductive still in line.
And in the song which at my door thou dost sing
Speaks a tongue unfamiliar yet dulcet,
Like music false in ring.
Enter! Perchance a cup will lend thee spirit..
But no, thou goest;
So from my threshold I see thee depart
With a graceful sign to show thou'lt not tarry
And with hip ever so lightly bent
By step as of a girl who's weary...

SIX CHANSONS

Paul Hindemith

I. La Biche

O la biche; quel bel intérieur
d'anciennes forêts dans tes yeux abonde
combien de confiance ronde mêlée à
combien de peur
Tout cela, porté par
la vive gracilité de tes bonds.
Mais jamais rien n'arrive à cette impossessive
ignorance de ton front.

O thou doe, what vistas of secular forests appear in thine eyes reflected!
What confidence serene affected by transient shades of fear.
And it all is
borne on thy bounding course, for so gracile are thou! Nor comes aught to astound the impassive profound unawareness of thy brow.

II. Un Cygne

Un cygne avance sur l'eau
tout entouré de lui'même
comme un glissant tableau
ainsi à certains instants
un être que l'on aime
est tout un espace mouvant
Il se rapproche doublé
comme ce cygne aui nage
sur notre âme troublée
qui à cet être ajoute
la tremblante image
de bonheur et de doute.

A swan is breasting the flow
All in himself enfolded
Like a slow-moving tableau.
And so, at some time or place
A loved one will be molded
To seem like a migrating space
Will near us, floating redoubled
As a swan on the river
Upon our soul so troubled
Which swells it by the addition
Of a wraith aquiver
With delight and suspicion.

III. Puisque tout passe

Puisque tout passe, faisons la mélodie
passagère
Celle qui nous désaltère
aura de nous raison
Chantons ce qui nous quitte avec
amour et art
Soyons plus vite
que le rapide départ.

Since all is passing, retain
the melodies that wander by us
That which assuages when nigh us
Shall alone remain
Let us sing what will leave us
With our love and art
Ere it can grieve us
Let us the sooner depart.

IV. Printemps

O mélodie de la sève
Qui dans les instruments
De tous ces arbres s'élève
Accompagne le chant
De notre voix trop brève.
C'est pendant quelques mesures seulement
Que nous suivons les multiple figures
De ton long abandon
Ô abondante nature.
Quand il faudra nous taire
D'autres continueront
Mais à présent comment faire
pour te rendre mon grand coeur
complémentaire?

O song that from the sap art pouring
And through the sounding board
Of all this greenwood art soaring
Amplify our brief tone
The dying strain restoring
'Tis but few measures duration
That we share the fantasy,
The endless
variation of thy long ecstasy
O nature, fount of creation
After our song is ended
Others will assume the part
But meanwhile how can I tender
Unto thee all my heart in full surrender?

V. En Hiver

En hiver, la mort meurtrière
entre dans les maisons
Elle cherche la soeur, le père
Et leur joue du violon.
Mais quand la terre remue
Sous la bêche du printemps
La mort court dans les rues
Et salue les passants.

With winter, Death, grisly guest
Through the doorway steals in
Both the young and the old to quest
And he plays them his violin
Bur when the Spring's spades are beating
Frozen earth beneath blue sky
Then Death his way goes fleeting
Lightly greeting passers-by.

VI. Verger

Jamais la terre n'est plus réelle
Que dans tes branches, ô verger blond
Ni plus flottante que dans la dentelle
Que font les ombres sur le gazon
Là se rencontre ce qui nous reste
Ce qui pèse et ce qui nourrit
Avec le passage manifeste
De la tendresse infinie
Mais a ton centre la calme fontaine
Presque dormant en son ancien rond
De ce contraste parle à peine
Tant en elle il se confond.

The earth is nowhere so real a presence
As mid thy branches, O orchard blond
And nowhere so airy as here in the pleasance
Of lacy shadows on grassy pond
There we encounter that which we quested
That which sustains and nourishes life
And with it the passage manifested
Of sweetest tenderness undying
But at thy centre the spring's limpid waters
Almost asleep in the fountain's heart
Of this strange contrast scarce have
taught us
Since of them it is so truly part.